

Baltimore & Ohio Railroad: Rail Rolling Mill
End of Elm Street & Locust Alley
Cumberland
Allegany County
Maryland

HAER No. MD-2A

HAER
MD,
1-CUMB,
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD: RAIL ROLLING MILL

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Location: End of Elm Street & Locust Alley
Cumberland, Allegany County, Maryland

UTM: 17.692380.4390640
Quad: Cumberland

Dates of Construction: 1871

Builder: Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company

Original Use: Manufactured iron rails for route to Chicago and
for double-tracking main line from Cumberland to
Grafton, West Virginia; rolled iron bars and
other structural sections for railroad.

Present Use: Demolished 1981

Present Owner: N/A

Significance: With the inexhaustible supply of coal and the
eventual juncture of the route to Pittsburgh with
the mainline at Cumberland, the B & O thought
significant economics were available by producing
rails and other rolled products at this location,
rather than purchasing them from commercial
mills. The Rail Rolling Mill is one of several
large manufacturing buildings erected by the
railroad in Cumberland, beginning in 1869. The
mill, completed in 1871, was standard
heavy-timber construction. However, there were
no columns that impeded floor space, thus
allowing completed flexibility in the placement
of machinery and the arrangement of manufacturing
processes at ground level. Rather than rows of
columns supporting the roof, it was carried by a
99'-6" clear-spanning Howe truss with central
ventilating monitor running nearly the entire 316
foot length of the building.

Originally, the mill had twelve puddling
furnaces, a rail-train with three sets of rolls,
and one squeezer. There were also three pairs of
hot shears for cutting iron, two saws, two
blowers and two forging hammers--all driven by
steam engines. At the time of survey, all
rolling mills, machinery and equipment had been
removed and the mill was used for storage. The
entire Cumberland shops were demolished in 1981.

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Sources of Information: B&O Annual Reports: 1861, 1870, 1871, 1873, 1887,
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Transmitted by: Jean Yearby, HAER, 1984.